

Curriculum Unit Overviews

Social Studies Courses Ready for Board of Education Adoption in April 2024

- *Grade 6 Social Studies*
- *U.S. History*
- *Civics & American Government*

Grade 6 Social Studies Curriculum Overview

2023-2024

<p>Unit 1 <i>Bringing Order to the City</i></p>	<p>As students enter Grade 6 Social Studies we seek to widen their conception of the world in both time and place. By investigating world civilizations, and making modern connections to them, Unit 1 inculcates a curiosity and appreciation of the world cultures in students through class activities that put the student at the center of learning including acting out literature, conducting an archeological study, role play, and more. A theme that ties unit one together is, bringing order to a growing world. As we make our way around the world through time students explore the many ways different civilizations tried to maintain peace through legal, religious, and artistic means in the growing cities in the ancient world. The unit begins with a study of prehistoric hunter-gatherer cultures. By putting students in the boots of an archeologist students learn that other cultures are unique in their own right and have a dignity to be honored. By learning about others we can learn about ourselves. In this light, students then explore Egypt, the role of law and literature in Mesopotamian society, social obligations in ancient China, and social class and mobility in ancient India. To support students in their inquiry nonfiction reading skills and geography skills are regularly integrated throughout the unit.</p> <p>Profile of a Graduate Capacities: Citizenship</p>
<p>Unit 2 <i>The Spread of Ideas</i></p>	<p>While following Unit 1 chronologically, the theme of Unit 2, the Spread of Ideas, marks a distinct shift in historical focus. We live in the digital age, a time in which ideas and knowledge spread in nanoseconds. The amount of time it takes for the amount of knowledge in the world to double is now down to less than a year and experts predict it will be down to less than a day before long. Our unit will examine key moments in history that helped the amount of knowledge to vastly increase and the effects of that spread of knowledge. Students start their study with an examination of Roman infrastructure and how the arch, roads, and empire connected people to grow learning. Included in this portion is an investigation of the use of parables in Christianity as a means of oral transmission of the faith. As we make our way to the Han and Song Dynasties of classical China, we focus on the Chinese inventions of the printing press and compass. In each of these cases students predict the potential applications and impact of these inventions on the growth of knowledge. Students continue to the House of Wisdom of Baghdad was the learning center of the Muslim Empire, located at the crossroads of the world's great civilizations and a rich culture of learning resulted. Students finally examine the interdependence of economies through a study of the inflation caused by the Mali King, Mansa Musa's hajj to Mecca. Throughout the unit, activities that involve constructing, simulating, designing or interpreting are at the center of the student experience. Students are required to predict, extrapolate, and question the impact and meaning of the inventions on the spread of ideas. The exploration of each civilization is supported by nonfiction reading/listening sources and engaging geography skills. At the end of the unit, students will design an object to sell at our grade-wide trade fair as a summative assessment. The materials, symbols, shape, and design of their object will demonstrate aspects of the theme, content, and skills that were woven throughout the unit.</p> <p>Profile of a Graduate Capacities: Product Creation</p>
<p>Unit 3 <i>Worlds Collide</i></p>	<p>Our previous study of the Medieval World sets the stage for Unit 3 in which the civilizations of the Middle East, the Americas, Africa, and Asia often collide. The guiding capacity for Unit 3 is alternate perspectives and a central question asked throughout the unit is, whose story is being told? As students seek to answer versions of that question they will use primary sources to support and critique the historical record. Students first apply this question in their study of Marco Polo in which they contrast two authors' opinions of whether the explorer actually traveled to China. Later in the unit, during their study of the Renaissance, students gather evidence to answer the question, "Was Galileo a heretic?" When the students investigate the conquistadors of the sixteenth century they ask, "Should it be called Pizzaro's conquest of the Inca" or "The Great Incan Rebellion?" Later, students critique the underlying values of Bartolome de las Casas and Juan Gines De Sepulveda who each debated about the Spanish treatment of Native Americans for the King of Spain. Finally, students examine the scramble for Africa from both the European and African perspectives. In each of these cases, students are encouraged to demonstrate the many aspects of global thinking. As students seek to draw conclusions about each of these historic instances, they are encouraged to keep an open mind to all perspectives. As objective historians, they seek to identify the values and principles, the merits and limitations, of</p>

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	<p>all of the perspectives they are studying. Indeed, extreme black and white responses are often an oversimplification of complex issues. As in the previous units, student learning about these events is supported by nonfiction reading and geography skills.</p> <p>Profile of a Graduate Capacities: Alternate Perspectives</p>
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<p>Unit 1 <i>American Imperialism and Progressive Era 1900-1920</i></p>	<p>The excesses of the Gilded Age and the completion of our quest to control the west led to a critical reexamination of our nation. Reformers, called Progressives, sought to right many of the wrongs they saw within Gilded Age America, seeking to protect social welfare, encourage moral improvement, reform the economy, and increase effectiveness and efficiency. The umbrella of Progressivism was so large, and their goals so broad, many reformers who called themselves Progressives actually worked in opposition to each other. At the same time, the closing of the frontier and accomplishment of our Manifest Destiny led the United States to reevaluate its place in the world and begin to emerge onto the world stage in a way that it had never done before. In this unit, students will explore this key transitional period in American history through the course themes of equality, economics, and foreign policy.</p> <p>Profile of a Graduate Capacities: Analyzing, Alternate Perspectives</p>
<p>Unit 2 <i>Roaring 20s, Great Depression, and New Deal 1920s & 1930s</i></p>	<p>In this unit, students will examine the tumultuous decades of the 1920s and 30s, focusing on the main themes of equity, economics, and foreign policy.. They will explore the economic conditions that led to the boom of the late 20s and the bust of the Great Depression. They will examine the government's role in the creation of the economic prosperity of the 20s as well as their attempts to overcome the challenges of the Depression. At the same time, students will examine the continued efforts by marginalized groups to obtain their piece of the American dream, and the attempts by some to prevent them from doing so. In the PBA for the unit, students will take a closer look at some of the government's actions in the New Deal and recommend actions for what the government could have done differently to achieve greater relief, recovery, or reform.</p> <p>Profile of a Graduate Capacities: Idea Generation</p>
<p>Unit 3 <i>World War II and Early Cold War WWII-1954</i></p>	<p>This unit will focus on examining World War II through the lens of the three main themes of the course (Equity, Economics, and Foreign Policy). Students will explore American attitudes towards the war before our involvement and how we ultimately came to join the war. Much of the unit will focus on the homefront and the impact of the war on the American economy and traditionally marginalized groups in the country (women, African Americans, Asian Americans). Students will also explore the foreign policy aspects of the war, examining the meetings of the Big Three during the war and the factors surrounding Truman's decision to drop the atomic bombs on Japan. Students will also explore how World War II led directly to the Cold War. Students will explore the early crises of the Cold War and how the United States came to pursue a policy of containment and the consequences of such a policy.</p> <p>Profile of a Graduate Capacities: Alternate Perspectives, Decision Making</p>
<p>Unit 4 <i>Civil Rights and Continuing Cold War 1954 - 1973</i></p>	<p>In this unit, students will explore the tumultuous 20 years from the mid -1950s to the mid-1970s. Continuing to focus on the themes of equality, economics, and foreign policy, students will examine the Civil Rights movement and other movements it inspired. Students will pay particular attention to how groups of citizens can effectively create change in society. They will also explore the nation's evolving Cold War policy and its deepening involvement in Vietnam, culminating in the Vietnam war and the anti-war movements.</p> <p>Profile of a Graduate Capacities: Citizenship</p>
<p>Unit 5 <i>The Rise of Conservatism 1974 - 1992</i></p>	<p>In this unit, students will explore the malaise of the 1970s and the resulting "Reagan Revolution," focusing on the course themes of equity, economics, and foreign policy. In particular, students will focus on uncovering what led to the rise of the modern conservative movement, including stagflation in the 1970s, the rise and fall of Richard Nixon, the turmoil of the Carter Administration, and the presidency of Ronald Reagan.</p> <p>Profile of a Graduate Capacities: Analyzing</p>

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<p><u>Unit 6</u> <i>Modern America</i> <i>1993-Present</i></p>	<p>In this final unit, students will be exploring modern America, continuing to focus on the themes of civil rights, economics, and foreign policy. Students will examine the presidencies of Clinton, Bush, and Obama with a major emphasis on the economic boom of the 90s (and subsequent crash), the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the financial crisis of 2008. In the PBA for this unit, students will use their knowledge of the preceding decades to try to make logical predictions for what the future holds for the United States.</p> <p>Profile of a Graduate Capacities: Idea Generation, Product Creation</p>
<p><u>Research</u> <u>Unit</u></p>	<p>This unit provides students with the opportunity to embark on an in-depth, independent study of a topic of personal interest. Throughout this unit, using a "workshop-style" model, students will work with their peers and the instructor as they build a culminating argumentative research paper. Activities will be dedicated to an application of skills as well as reflection on the research and writing processes. Students will begin with the vital task of proper topic selection, followed by careful development of a workable research question and then the construction of a strong thesis statement. Students will narrow, broaden, or shift the focus of their papers as they research using both primary and secondary sources. Students will actively search for, evaluate, and read a variety of sources, take organized notes on evidence that supports their thesis statements, while properly citing all sources. After they organize their evidence using an outline structure, they will begin writing a formal research paper that clearly supports their thesis statement and demonstrates their understanding of the topic. Their papers will not be mere reports on historical facts, but rather argumentative papers that add to the scholarship on their topics. Throughout the process, teachers will conference with students and help guide them through this independent project.</p> <p>Profile of a Graduate Capacities: Analyzing, Design</p>

<p>Unit 1 <i>Foundations of American Democracy</i></p>	<p>The first unit establishes the overarching mission and foundation for the Civics and American Government course. Students will identify a significant contemporary issue of personal interest which they wish to investigate throughout the course.</p> <p>Concepts of power, influence, and control are inseparable from the study of government. Understanding both the source and legitimacy of power will help the student understand many of the foundational concepts of the American Constitutional Republic. To inform their exploration, students will study the early philosophers and the different theories on how power is allocated in a government and also where the legitimacy of power is based. Students will connect this concept to their selected issue being followed throughout the course, examining the people, groups, and government organizations that may have power, influence, or control relative to their issue, as well as whether these individuals should be in control of this issue.</p> <p>Continuing with the theme of power, students will then look at various trends and events leading to the Declaration of Independence and American Revolution. This study will take place from multiple perspectives, considering both the viewpoints of the Patriots and Loyalists and their determination as to how to move towards the establishment of a new, independent nation. Students will journey through this process, understanding that the ineffectiveness of the Articles of Confederation would require "Constitutional compromises" from the powerful elite meeting together for a summer in Philadelphia. Much of what would come from these compromises represent not only a particular demographic perspective, but also a view of the ideological divide between Federalists and Antifederalists.</p> <p>Profile of a Graduate Capacities: Analyzing, Inquiry</p>
<p>Unit 2 <i>Interactions Among Branches of Government</i></p>	<p>In 1787 the Founding Fathers established a Federal Republic through a Constitution which established core principles of democracy: equality, rights, liberties, opportunities, and security. Central to those principles is the concept of consensus. Over 200 years later, the importance of the role of consensus will allow the student to better grasp the inner workings of the American democratic system. The Unit on "Governing by Consensus" focuses on the structure, function, and relationship between and among branches in the federal government and local, state, and national governmental bodies. Through a deeper look into the principles of the Constitution, students will know and be able to apply knowledge and concepts about government power and purpose as the Founding Fathers may have intended. Students will discuss the organization of the government at the federal level, and may also compare those structures to state and local government structures. In particular, the unit will ask students to consider the reasoning behind laws, how they impact their daily lives, and the benefits and drawbacks of making decisions (legislating) by consensus. In a government that was established to consider equal representation and power of the majority, students will define consensus and evaluate how citizens work together within this social contract. Students, as lawmakers, will further their understanding of the way in which the Framers established the lawmaking process.</p> <p>Profile of a Graduate Capacities: Idea Generation, Product Creation, Citizenship</p>
<p>Unit 3 <i>Political Participation</i></p>	<p>Essential to the health of the American political system is an active and informed electorate. Throughout this unit, students will explore the full range of the political spectrum, reflecting on their own beliefs and roles as active participants in the election process. Beyond the historical components of voting and voter rights, student focus will be to investigate the factors which influence an individual's political attitudes and actions to better understand voter behavior. Students will question and research political, economic, social, and geographic influences on voter behavior. In addition, a comprehensive look at political parties and their platforms will guide students as they dissect the</p>

	<p>structure and elements of elections, the campaign process, and campaign finance. Students will be able to recognize and assess many factors, including the role of the media and outside interest groups, which influence the political process and voter consensus.</p> <p>Profile of a Graduate Capacities: Idea Generation, Product Creation, Citizenship</p>
<p>Unit 4 <i>Civil Liberties, Civil Rights, and the Common Good</i></p>	<p>As students prepare to understand both individual rights and the common good, they will need to analyze how the Constitution and government are both limited and powerful as they aim to protect the citizen. Students will learn that the federal powers, as outlined in the Constitution and interpreted by the Judiciary, guide the operations of the US government. Students will also break down how both formal and informal change occurs in government, especially considering the enduring nature of a 200 year-old Constitution. Students will examine the process to amend the Constitution and the additions to the original text. Additionally, they will break down how interpretation and judicial review potentially exert the power of change in government . Students will learn, through case study, how the Supreme Court has broad power in government through its rulings on specific Constitutional issues, as established through precedent in landmark cases. Concepts of judicial activism, judicial restraint, and strict vs. loose constructionism will help students to dissect some of these past court rulings and determine how the court may rule on future issues. The unit will ask students to apply these lessons, from the judiciary to the Bill of Rights, to their own lives, weighing the balance between Individual rights and the common good. Specific Constitutional rights and liberties, as outlined in the First, Fourth, and Fourteenth Amendments, will be used to exemplify this balance between personal freedoms and the common good.</p> <p>Profile of a Graduate Capacities: Design, Citizenship, Product Creation</p>